ZAMI Atlanta's Premiere Organization for Lesbians of African Descent

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December, 2003

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Simone Bell is a graduating senior at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia where she is an English major. Bell who is a writer and poet believes that as a black, lesbian, womyn, it is her responsibility to allow her light to shine in the middle of darkness as a beacon for those who are lost.

According to Beatrice Sullivan, "Only until I realized my identity as a queer woman of color writer/ poet activist, did I become truly comfortable with myself." As a 16-year-old junior in high school, Sullivan was one of two teens invited to speak at the first National Black Lesbian Conference. She entered Oberlin College last fall where she is a English and Writing major.

Taquelia Washington is pursuing an advanced degree in Social Work at San Jose State. Washington has spent most of her time in recent years helping others by serving as a counselor in the House, a student-operated service at UC-Davis that provides safe and confidential counseling to students experiencing emotional distress as well as providing counseling at the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Resource

Alicia Skillman is a resident of Detroit, Michigan and is studying Physics at Oakland University in her quest to become a Patent Attorney. Skillman founded Family Reunion: PFLAG Detroit for People of Color. She also serves as vice chair of the Triangle Foundation, which is Michigan's largest gay rights advocacy group.

Your on-going support of ZAMI signals your willingness to do **"the hard work and scrutiny of now"** so necessary for us to transform our futures. On behalf of our board and 2002 Audre Lorde Scholars, we want to thank you for your past contributions and hope that you will consider giving the gift of education this holiday season. We know that you gave generously last year. Please consider increasing your contribution.

In community spirit,

Mary Anne Adams,

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ZAMI: A Carriacou word for women who work together as friends and lovers…

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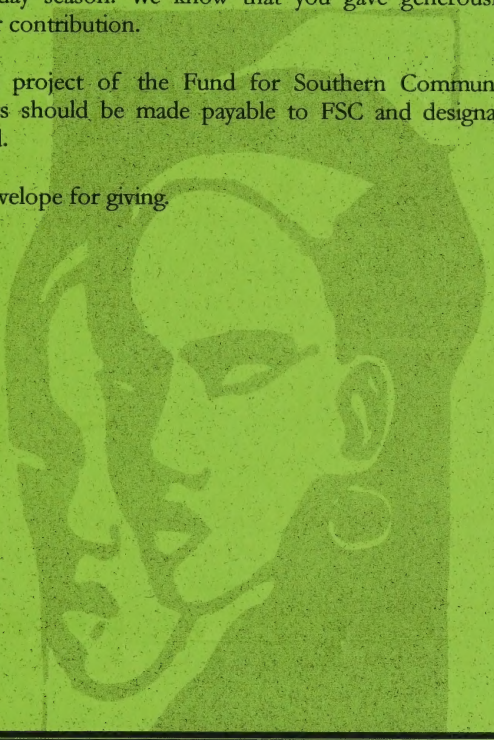

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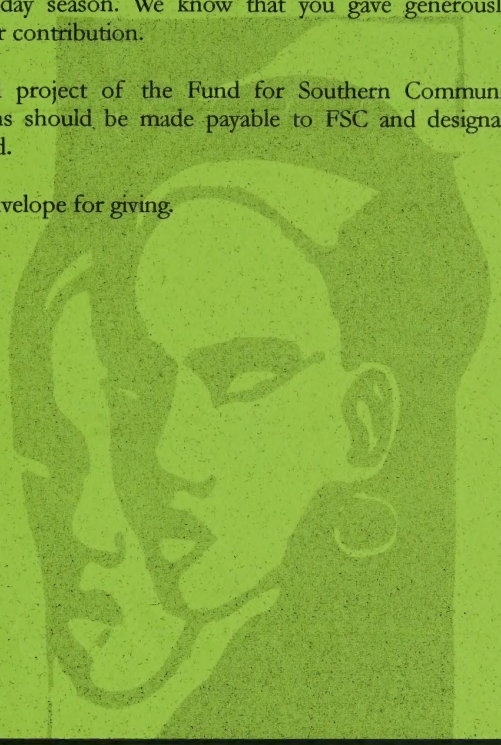

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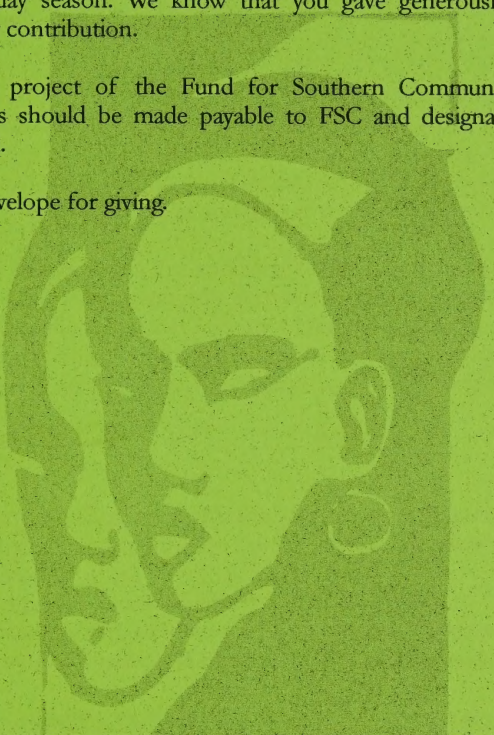

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2003 AUDRE LORDE SCHOLARS

Kendra G. Mann, the recipient of the **Sadiqua Bey Memorial Award**, is a student of the University of Phoenix and will graduate in 2005 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Management. After graduation, she plans to pursue a Master's degree in Health Management. Mann currently serves as Business Services Manager for Planned Parenthood, a non-profit organization committed to women's interests. Her role in the organization has been pivotal in helping to close the gap on issues related to sexual orientation. Mann relocated from Detroit to California in 2001 and lives with her partner of four years and some of their children (both have three boys), a family some refer to as "The Gay Version of the Brady Bunch." Her purpose in life is to lead by example and educate people along the way. Consequently, she's been chosen to speak to new employees about diversity, of which she says, "I take this challenge on with great pleasure, as I know that the Creator has work for me to do."

Hagar Pleasant-Bey, the recipient of the **Hannah Guishard Award**, is a senior at Trinity College in Washington, DC. Pleasant-Bey is a Mathematics major who continually demonstrates an ability to balance academics with community involvement. For nearly three years, she has worked with the Fresh Air Fund, an organization that serves at-risk youth, where she brings a spirit of empowerment to the youth and motivation to her peers. Pleasant-Bey has received numerous academic awards, plays soccer and lacrosse, and has served as the Vice President of the on-campus Lesbian/Bisexual Alliance. Being from a large Muslim family, Pleasant-Bey maintains that her activism has been neither traditional nor conventional. On her role in the process of making a difference, she comments, "...the most productive way that I can bring about change is by being comfortable with myself."

Cristel Serena Miller, the recipient of the **Sherry Turner Award**, is a junior at Rice University in Houston, Texas. Miller was recruited to Rice as a Texas Minority Student Scholar, a select group that represents students who excel both academically and socially. As a freshman, she was part of the Century Scholars Program, which places intellectually outstanding students in areas of research. She is a Psychology/Studio Arts (Film) major, who sits on the Rice University President's Council on Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Committee. Miller also serves as Vice President of the college's Gay Student Alliance, as well as the Gay Pride Organization. Upon graduating from Rice University, she plans to pursue a Masters of Fine Arts degree in film production. When speaking to high school student audiences made up mostly of minorities and African-American girls, Miller uses every opportunity to stress the importance of education, of which she says, "I have strong opinions on...the education of women around the world so that they can have the tools to make informed decisions."

Clarice Thompson and **Sharon Thomas** are the recipients of the **Ruth Ellis Award**.

Clarice Thompson is the visiting Instructor/Music Director at Brown University-Africana Studies in Rhode Island. She serves as the Ethnomusicologist, specializing in African-American music, and is pursuing a Doctor of Music degree from the University of Mississippi. In her capacity as faculty member, Thompson is a mentor to many lesbian, gay, bi-gender and transgender students of African descent. She and her partner typically open their hearts and homes to counsel and serve as role models. Thompson currently supervises the student's research in the area of transgender male-to-female persons, with a focus on entertainers. As a talented musician, Thompson has been able to reach many people while serving in roles ranging from composer, arranger, director, and producer of various productions and performance pieces. Her productions on campus have succeeded in bringing together individuals with differing sexual orientations across racial lines. Through music and theatre, Thompson affirms, "My art will always speak from the mouths of people of all backgrounds."

Sharon Thomas is a graduating senior of the University of Washington in Tacoma, pursuing a degree in Mass Communications. It is in this arena that Thomas has realized the power of the media and its impact on society's views on race, gender and sexual orientation. She started a computer technical center for lesbians, in which she still volunteers as a tutor. In addition, Thomas also volunteers and is a member of the Women's Funding Alliance Committee. Her thesis (*How Far Has Television Come in Portraying Gays, Lesbians, and African Americans?)* asks and aims to answer the question, "Just how beautiful is being Black, gay, or lesbian in the television media today?"

Louis Dixon, the recipient of the **Keiron Williams Memorial Award**, is a sophomore at Cal State University-Dominguez Hills, pursing a degree in Human Services. While consistently serving as a positive role model for the gay community, Dixon has served as the spokesperson/model for the "HIV Stops With Me" campaign in Long Beach, California. He was instrumental in starting the Unity Fellowship Church in California and assisted in the formation of the Minority Aids Project. Dixon's goal is to eventually work in a therapist capacity with young people via OASIS (Out Adolescents Staying in School) while continuing to be a strong advocate for HIV awareness and supportive services for gays and lesbians. His course of action: "...continue to do the footwork and hope that somehow I can make a difference."

Andreka N. Brundage, the recipient of the **Sha Mendon Award**, is a freshman entering Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia, pursuing education in English and Women's Studies. Since 2000, Brundage has served on the Board of Directors of Alphabet Soup at VOX/Youth Communications, a non-profit organization for youth that provides the space and encouragement to express themselves through the arts (writing, photography, art, etc.). Upon joining the LGBTQ & A (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Questioning and Allies)

group within Youth Communications, Brundage coordinated a workshop that was presented at the National Black Lesbian Conference. She currently serves as a volunteer at the Dekalb Rape Crisis Center. In addition to pursuing a career as an English Professor, Brundage intends also to continue to mentor young gay and lesbian teens. Stressing the importance of supplementing her educational experience with Women's Studies as a minor, Brundage says, "Women's Studies is essential to my being equipped with the knowledge to shatter myths..."

Leslie Johnson, **Crystal S. Wiley**, and **Tineka Johnson** are the recipients of the **Sheryl Burke Award**.

Leslie Johnson left her hometown of Chicago, Illinois to enter Stanford University as a freshman in the fall of 2000. Quickly, Johnson found herself mired in many communities. She has even been called a "Professional Lesbian" because of the extent to which she is involved in the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and transgender community (LGBT). "Being out has come to mean a lot more to me than just being visibly gay. It really penetrates almost every realm of my life and I am comfortable with my sexuality and what it means to other people," says Johnson. The president of Black and Queer at Stanford (BlaQS) for the past two years, this year Johnson spearheaded a new program, Café Q, which is designed to build bridges between the LGBT community and a diverse array of student organizations. According to Benjamin Davidson, the Director of the LGBT Community Resources Center, things have not been easy for Johnson at Stanford. As a Black woman, a lesbian, an artist, a deeply religious person and an athlete, she has been challenged to build a community in which she can thrive as a whole person. Not only has Johnson taken on that challenge but she has gone a step further and become a role model and mentor to many younger students. Johnson expects to receive her degree in Science Technology and Society in May 2004.

Crystal Wiley is a graduating senior at Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia, and is a founding member of A.D.O.R.E. (Affirmed Daughters of Ruth Ellis), a campus organization that supports lesbian and bi-sexual women of color. Wiley, whose will graduate with a Political Science degree in 2004, is the President of the college Judicial Board and a member of the college Supreme Court. In these roles, she is called upon to demonstrate her fairness and leadership skills while handling student relations. Wiley was instrumental in A.D.O.R.E. hosting the first Queer Women of Color Week at Agnes Scott College this year. In addition to A.D.O.R.E., she has also been at the forefront in starting Angry Citizens of DiverCity, an underground organization that initiates radical acts such as distributing pamphlets that identify individuals who have made problematic statements on campus. The group recognizes and calls attention to instances of racism, homophobia, and classism, among other issues. Of her revolutionary stance, Wiley says, "I believe in doing everyday random acts that alter the world I live in to make it a safe place for all people..."

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2003 AUDRE LORDE SCHOLARS

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